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Al-Qa'ida Magazine Debates Attacks in Saudi Arabia – Proposes More Attacks in the U.S. will Boost Support

For the past several months, Al-Qa'ida operatives have been debating the organization's attacks in Saudi Arabia. There has been no dispute over striking American or Western targets around the world - only regarding attacks within the kingdom. Furthermore, while some favor striking only at "Crusader" – namely American – targets in Saudi Arabia, others are willing to include the Saudi regime and security forces as targets.

*The opposition to attacks inside Saudi Arabia, and specifically against the country's regime and security forces, is not based on religious considerations. The arguments against these attacks focuses on tactical matters, such as the importance of Saudi society's identification with and funding of Al-Qa'ida – and the implications of such attacks on the potential of recruiting new members from Saudi Arabia. The following are excerpts from recent editions of the Al-Qa'ida magazine, **The Voice of Jihad**:*

The Attacks and Al-Qa'ida's Status in Saudi Society

*High-ranking Al-Qa'ida member **Abd Al-'Aziz Al-Muqren, also known as Abu Hajar**, who is on Saudi Arabia's most-wanted list, referred to the dispute over the attacks inside Saudi Arabia in an interview with an Al-Qa'ida online magazine, *The Voice of Jihad*: " Jihad members and Mujahideen sympathizers were divided: Some said we must attack the invading forces that defile the land of the two holy places [i.e. the Arabian Peninsula], and must cause the Americans to become preoccupied with themselves and their bases so they won't leave them to crush the countries and lands of the Muslims, country by country.*

"Others said we had to preserve the security of this base and of this country [i.e. Saudi Arabia], from which we recruit the armies, from which we take out the young people, and from which we receive [financial] backing. It must therefore remain safe.

"My opinion is an intermediate opinion, between the two groups. It is true that we must keep the enemy preoccupied with himself and not give him a sense of security, because as soon as he secures his bases and his lines of supply, he will have an opportunity to use them to attack our brothers in different parts of the countries of the Islamic world. But we must prepare ourselves and be ready for this momentous event the best way we possibly can. We told them: 'Wait, we are readying ourselves.' Then we attacked the Americans.

"It is also true that we must take advantage of this country [Saudi Arabia] because it is the primary source of funds for most Jihad movements, and it has some degree of security and freedom of movement. But we must strike a balance between this and America's invasion of the Islamic world and its hobbling of the Jihad movement and even of other Islamic movements..." [\[1\]](#)

Another Strike in the U.S. Will Restore Sympathy for Al-Qa'ida

Al-Qa'ida members deny that Muslims have been killed in their bombings in Saudi Arabia, but recognize that the regime has managed, via the media, to convey such

a message – which has damaged Al-Qa'ida's image.

In an interview in *The Voice of Jihad*, **Louis Attiya Allah** (an alias), [2] one of Al-Qa'ida's leading ideologues, stated: "Regarding the Al-Muhaya operation [the November 8, 2003 bombing in Riyadh], it can be claimed that the house of Salul [3] had some media success in portraying the battle as the killing of Muslims, and in inciting some against the Mujahideen. But this effect is temporary and will disappear if, for example, the Mujahideen strike another blow in America. Then sympathy will return to what it was in the past, and may even increase."

When asked whether the attacks in Saudi Arabia "caused Mujahideen shares to plummet" in Saudi society, he responded: "That may have happened, but we must look at the matter with a broader view, and place these operations in the framework of the war of the Mujahideen against the whole Western-American plan. At certain stages of this war, the Mujahideen can think they require these operations, despite their high price in terms of morale." [4]

Attacks are Against 'Crusaders,' Not the Saudi Regime

The statement that Al-Qa'ida members in Saudi Arabia are fighting the Americans and not the Saudi security forces has repeatedly appeared in *The Voice of Jihad*. In the interview, Abu Hajer said: "We have not carried out a single attack. All the operations that took place were defensive operations. The brothers try as much as possible to avoid clashes with the military and the security forces. Nevertheless, the government is escalating its war, and is trying to uproot me, uproot you, and uproot all Islamists... I have sworn to purge the Arabian Peninsula of the polytheists. We were born in this country, and we will fight in it against the Crusaders and against the Jews until we remove them or taste what was tasted by **Hamza bin Abd Al-Muttalib** [i.e. martyrdom]..." [5]

Voice of Jihad editorial writer **Suleiman Al-Dosari** went even further, calling on the Mujahideen to fight the Saudi security forces only when it was clearly self-defense: "We draw the attention of the Mujahideen to the strategy of the **Sheikh of the Mujahideen, Abu Abdallah Osama bin Laden, and Sheikh Dr. Ayman Al-Zawahiri**, a strategy on which many of the great Mujahideen have agreed in regard to fighting the enemy: Our number-one enemy is the Jews and the Christians, and we must make ourselves available and invest all our effort until we destroy them – and we are capable of doing this if Allah allows us to – because they are the main obstacle to the establishment of the Islamic state.

"... Notice the trick used by the [Arab] tyrants... [In their view] the blood of an American is equal to the blood of all the Muslims. They are willing to send hundreds [of Muslims] to their deaths in exchange for Americans enjoying security and well-being... We must be wary of this trick and avoid, as much as possible, confronting the state's armies and forces, so that we can deliver knock-out blows to the occupiers, Allah willing.

"This does not mean surrendering to those defending the Crusaders if they raid us; on the contrary, in this case we must resist with all our might and punish them so they turn their swords towards the Americans and fight in our ranks, refrain from confronting us, or stand against us and wait for what is anticipated for them [at our hands], by virtue of Allah and with His strength..." [6]

The Al-Haramayn Brigades: Focusing on Saudi Targets

Saudi Arabia does not lack for radical Islamists interested in filling the void left by Al-Qa'ida when it gave up direct attacks against the Saudi regime. One example is a new organization called **The Al-Haramayn [Two Holy Places] Brigades**, which has so far published two communiqués claiming to have carried out, on December 5, 2003, the shooting of a high-ranking Saudi security officer. Its first communiqué stated:

"The aim of this operation was, first and foremost, to let him [the Saudi officer] and every apostate tyrant know that he will not in any way be protected from the Mujahideen and their weapons, Allah willing... This operation was the first

measure by the Brigades in the land of the two holy places, and part of its plan to purge it, as it was decided that the first stage would focus on the two groups of apostates:

"The first group is the leaders of the Crusader attack on the land of the two holy places, and it includes all those who cooperated with America in any way – by gathering information on the Mujahideen, by writing reports, by giving advice to the Crusaders, by raiding peaceful Muslims and intimidating them in their homes, by bringing their sons to the prisons, and by raiding the Mujahideen groups. The second group is the hangmen, which includes anyone who carries out torture in the prisons..."

"Since our brothers in Al-Qa'ida are preoccupied with waging war on the Crusaders, and since it has become clear from their repeated communiqués that they are not attacking the internal security apparatus, we have decided to relieve them of this important [religious obligation] and to purge the land of the two holy places of the [Arab] agents, freeing [Al-Qa'ida] to purge it of the Crusaders..."

"This is a message from The Al-Haramayn Brigades, [a message] based on a plan for 'cleansing the land of the two holy places,' directed at anyone whose hand is stained with the defilement of collaboration [with the Americans] or whose defiled hand has tortured any of the monotheists [i.e. the Islamists]: He must cease this immediately, or the hands of the monotheists will reach him..." [7]

Strike At America So America Cannot Strike at Saudi Arabia

The damage done to Al-Qa'ida's image by the Saudi bombings is not the only reason the organization prefers targeting "Crusaders" in Saudi Arabia or carrying out attacks in the West. According to Louis Attiya Allah, some Al-Qa'ida members claim that the Saudi regime's continued existence is in the organization's best interest, because it prevents the U.S. from striking hard at the Islamists in the Arabian Peninsula.

When asked why there had been no Jihad operations against the royal family, Attiya Allah said: "I don't know. Personally, I think attacking the heads of the regime will hasten its collapse. These decisions are discussed at Mujahideen meetings, and it is they who make this kind of decision, as ultimately these are military decisions.

"Perhaps the aim of the Mujahideen is to refrain from toppling the regime because the treasonous cover provided by the Saudi regime prevents America from striking a powerful blow to the entire country. That is one of the ideas that led the Mujahideen [to prefer] first of all neutralizing America, or paralyzing it, and only afterward turning to this regime and its ilk. I say this, even though I maintain that eliminating some members of the regime would be very useful and would make things easier for the Mujahideen without causing the regime's downfall."

Attiya Allah also discussed what might happen in the region were the Saudi regime to collapse. When asked whether "the Americans would leave us alone if the zero hour arrives and the regime of the House of Salul is removed," Attiya Allah responded:

"No, they would not leave us alone. As a first step, they would try to secure the oil fields, in accordance with an old plan. They would not stand idly by. But the question is whether they would be able to do this in the event that the regime completely collapses and anarchy prevails. I doubt this very much. If they become more and more entangled in the Iraqi quagmire, and if we strike painful blows in America, those blows will deprive them of their ability to focus on [Saudi Arabia]... What arouses real concern is the acts of their allies the Shiites in the event of the collapse [of the Saudi regime]. This would be an extremely grave situation requiring great thought and preparation of alternatives by the Mujahideen."

Also in the interview, Attiya Allah explained why Al-Qa'ida was more concerned about the U.S. than about the Saudi regime: "The Mujahideen are waging a great

ongoing war with the masters [the Americans], and the slaves [the Saudis] have no place in this battle. The slaps and kicks that harm the slave during the Mujahideen's battle against its master are of no consequence in light of his fate when his master is defeated... The Mujahideen are warring with the masters, but we may soon see a little more attention directed toward these slaves..." [8]

Al-Qa'ida's Political Program

In the interview, The Voice of Jihad asked Louis Attiya Allah how he responded to those who argued that Al-Qa'ida had no comprehensive political program. He said, "Does **[Saudi Crown Prince] Abdallah bin Abd Al-Aziz**, for example, have a political program, apart from being an agent and slave of the Americans? Do any of the existing regimes in the Islamic world have a genuine political program?... If you mean a political program compatible with the existing world order, I say to you that yes, Al-Qa'ida has no political program compatible with the existing world order, simply because the existing world order does not recognize us as an independent Islamic state, and forces us to be its satellite, to adapt ourselves to its secular laws and to be subjugated to its military rule.

"Al-Qa'ida is absolutely opposed to this, and states: The world order must be removed from the region and defeated, first of all militarily. Then, the Islamic state must be reestablished, in accordance with the Islamic regime. This means that we will control our fate, rule over ourselves, and control our resources. More generally, we will rebuild our lives according to our foundations and our principles. The experience [of an Islamic state] is real, and it existed 1,300 years ago. The peoples of the East ruled themselves and lived according to their own rules long before the West was in the region. There is nothing to prevent the revival of these rules, which are based on the Koran and the Sunna...

"No political program has a chance of succeeding if we do not defeat the West, militarily and culturally, and remove it from Muslim countries. Then, it will not be difficult for the nation, with the help of its tremendous resources, to rebuild life according to religious Islamic principles. We will become the masters of the world, as the world's economic fate depends on us because we have the resources the world needs and all the elements of controlling the world are in our hands. What we are lacking is to live free and to rule ourselves by ourselves, cut off from the West and its agents."

'Arab Nation States Have Neither a Right to Exist Nor a Popular Base'

Attiya Allah also spoke of the fate Al-Qa'ida has planned for the Arab countries: "The [Arab] nation-states... are a Western model that the West created to allow it to build up its general colonialist plan for the Islamic East. These countries have no religious foundation, and have neither a right to exist nor a popular base. They were forced upon the Muslim peoples, and their survival is linked to the Western forces that created them. Therefore, the general aim of the Jihad and the Mujahideen is to strike at the foundations and infrastructure of the Western colonialist program or at the so-called world order – or, to put it bluntly, to defeat Crusaders in the battle that has been going on for over a century. Their defeat means, simply, the elimination of all forms of nation-states, such that all that remains is the natural existence familiar to Islam – the regional entity under the great Islamic state.

The Jihad Movement Will Not Stop at Any Arab Border

"Expelling the colonialists from the Muslim lands means simply eradicating the borders and all types of nation-states created by the West. The significance of this is that when the Jihad goes into action in Iraq, for example, it will not stop at the colonialist borders; it will not stop in Jordan and recognize it as an entity, because in Islamic concepts this country called Jordan has no [right to] exist. The Jihad movement in the Arabian Peninsula will not be stopped by the borders of the so-called Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, because the entity called by this name is an artificial entity that has no religious foundation. There is no religious consideration that prevents, for example, the transfer of Jihad outside this entity to Yemen or to the countries called the Gulf States. All these types of nation-states have no significance, and they have no [religious] protection preventing their removal

"Igniting the fire in the Arabian Peninsula is expected to be one of the keys to the great change, because the Arabian Peninsula is the heart, and any change in the Arabian Peninsula affects the other parts of the Islamic body."

'The More Martyrs' Blood Shed, the Greater the Light of Jihad'

"Even if we assume that, Allah willing, the sparking of conflicts will lead to painful results in the short term and perhaps in the intermediate term, in the long term the changes happening here will be the key to the cleansing of the entire Islamic world, to ridding ourselves of the colonialists, and to removing the Crusaders – so that we can then prepare for the great conflicts with them in the battles to come, including the decisive war with the Byzantines of which the Prophet spoke... [9]"

"The main enemies of the nation, the Byzantines, will not come to their end until Judgment Day, and therefore there is no point in talking of stopping the battle... The most important thing is that the Mujahideen will safeguard the burning ember of Jihad. The more martyrs' blood is shed for the sake of this ember, the greater its light; it will burn the enemies more quickly and victory will draw near, Allah willing..." [10]"

[1] The Voice of Jihad, Nos. 1 and 2, Sha'ban 1424 (October 2003).

[2] Louis Attiya Allah is the alias of a Saudi who is considered a leading Al-Qa'ida ideologue. His writings have appeared on the Internet since September 11, and since the killing of **Sheikh Yousef Al-'Ayyiri**, Attiya Allah is probably the most popular of Al-Qa'ida's ideologues.

[3] A highly derogatory term used by Islamists for the Saudi royal family, the house of Saud. The term is derived from **Abdallah bin Ubay ibn Salul**, considered in Islam to be the leader of the hypocrites.

[4] The Voice of Jihad, No. 6, Shawwal 1424 (early December 2003).

[5] The Voice of Jihad, Nos. 1 and 2, Sha'ban 1424 (October 2003).

[6] The Voice of Jihad, No. 2, Sha'ban 1424 (October 2003).

[7] <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/globalislamicmedia/message/228>.

[8] The Voice of Jihad, No. 6, Shawwal 1424 (early December, 2003).

[9] A reference to the war against the Christians, termed in this context "Byzantines" following a Hadith that is attributed to the Prophet Muhammad regarding the future battle. See [MEMRI Special Dispatch No. 447](#).

[10] The Voice of Jihad, No. 6, Shawwal 1424 (early December 2003).



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